

Peace Prayer

By John B. Foley, S.J.

First Sunday in Advent



His
name shall
be called....
Prince
of
Peace....
— Isaiah 9:6 —

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
—Isaiah 2:4—



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Old Orchard Church

November 29, 2009—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

Celebrating Messiah Jesus:

Prince of Peace

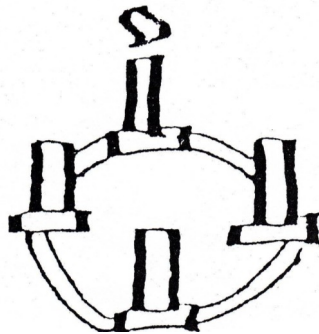
Child, when Herod wakes,
and hate or exploitation
swing their dripping swords,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.

Child, when Caesar's laws
choke love or strangle freedom,
calling darkness light,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.

Child, when Caiaphas
sends truth to crucifixion
to protect his prayers,
from your cross and cradle
sing a new song.

Child, your helpless love
brings death and resurrection;
joyfully we come
to your cross and cradle
with a new song—
Alleluia! Alleluia!

—Brian Wren (1936-)



Anno Domini 2009

Scripture Reading

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:5-66

Sermon

“Sheep or Goat”

Matthew 25:31-46

Mark Tucker, associate pastor, preaching

The End of War—on Isaiah 2:1-4

1 Isaiah lived to see his prediction that Zion would not fall to Assyria fulfilled in the overthrow of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, by the act of the Lord. Maybe this poem arose from his conviction, excited and confirmed by this deliverance, that the great Zion-based promises would yet be fulfilled. At all events, the fact that the poem is found in two prophets [see also Micah 4:1-4] indicates its popular currency. In the present setting Isaiah uses it to challenge the people to face up to what, possibly, they were singing with glib detachment. If others are ever to say **Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord**, (v. 3) Judah must heed the call **Come, ...let us walk in the light of the LORD** (v. 5). ...The presence and truth of the Lord (v. 2-3a) exercises a supernatural magnetism, producing a reordered world (v 4a) and a new humanity (v. 4b)....

2 In the last days or ‘at the end of the days’ is the undated future, neither necessarily far nor certainly near. It is also known as ‘the day of the Lord’ bringing both judgment and victory leading to peace: the consummation and enjoyment of God’s rule. The prophets insist on the certainty of what God will do and the present necessity of readiness. What had always been known to be true of Zion [that it is the joy of the whole earth] will be universally recognized.

Mountains were widely held to be the homes of the gods. The exaltation of **the mountain of the LORD’s temple**, the mountain where he lives, typifies therefore a supernatural triumph of the Lord over all gods. The construction of **will be established** stresses fact and continuance....The incongruity of a *stream* flowing upwards to earth’s highest point is intentional; a supernatural magnetism is at work.

3 The **peoples** come voluntarily, notwithstanding the supernatural magnetism stressed by verse 2. Their coming transcends nationalism: they acknowledge the God of a single nation, **the God of Jacob**, as the God of all nations. They are moved by the desire **‘that he may teach’** and they affirm **‘so that we may walk’**. (This is true knowledge: a grasp of truth issuing in redirection of life.) They also come responsively **‘for law will go forth’**: Zion is the source of a law, a ‘teaching’ which is nothing less than **the word of the LORD**, veritable divine revelation.

4 In human political thinking the reduction of armaments is a hoped-for cause of peace and this is not without truth, but for Isaiah the abolition of armaments follows a divine reordering of the world consequent upon the transcending of nationalism by the recognition of the one true God. To **judge** means to ‘make authoritative pronouncements’, and to **settle disputes** means to ‘arbitrate’. The means of war (**beat their swords**), the practice of war (**take up sword**) and the mentality of war (**train for war**) all alike disappear. The choice of agricultural implements (**ploughshares and pruning hooks**) is symbolic of the return to the Garden of Eden: people right with God again; the curse removed; the end of the serpent’s dominion; an ideal environment.

—Alec Motyer in *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (1993)